

U.S. House and Senate Notification
Friday, May 21, 2010

To: Congressional Health Staff

From: Amy Hall
Director, Office of Legislation
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Re: CMS Proposes New Rules to Ensure Access to Telemedicine Services

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) placed on display at the *Federal Register* a proposed rule addressing the credentialing and privileging of physicians and practitioners providing telemedicine services.

Telemedicine involves the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to provide professional healthcare services and can allow patients located in remote areas to enjoy the same access to potentially life-saving technologies and expertise as patients in more populated parts of the country.

The proposed rule would streamline the process that Medicare-participating hospitals and critical care access hospitals (CAHs) partnering to deliver telemedicine services use to credential and grant privileges to telemedicine physicians. A hospital or CAH that provides telemedicine services to its patients via an agreement with a “distant-site” hospital would be allowed to rely upon information furnished by the distant-site hospital (often a larger medical center) in making credentialing and privileging decisions for the distant-site hospital’s physicians and practitioners who provide the telemedicine services. The new flexibility under the proposed rule would reduce the burden and duplicative nature of the traditional credentialing and privileging process for Medicare-participating hospitals and CAHs that are engaged in telemedicine agreements, while still assuring accountability to the process.

If you have any questions about this proposed rule, please contact the CMS Office of Legislation. Thank you.